AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A complete list of all the presently or formerly pending claims in the application is provided below, with suitable headings to show the status of each claim and, where appropriate, its current text.

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of operating a gaming system having a central authority associated with a database and interconnected to a plurality of gaming machines, comprising:

establishing in the database a player account ~~in said database~~ associated with at least one player;

providing a player card to ~~said~~ the one player, said player card being associated with ~~said~~ the player account;

~~inserting said player card into one of said gaming machines;~~

identifying ~~the~~ a start of a first regular gaming session ~~for said player~~ associated with the player account, wherein said start of the first regular gaming session occurs in response to an indication that the player card is inserted into the one gaming machine;

identifying ~~the~~ an end of ~~said~~ the first regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the first regular gaming session occurs in response to an indication that the player card is removed from the one gaming machine;

-3-

collecting first activity data from ~~said~~ the one gaming machine, wherein said first activity data corresponds to activity on the one gaming machine during ~~said~~ the first regular gaming session;

identifying ~~the~~ a start of a first virtual gaming session ~~for said one player~~ associated with the player account, wherein said start of the first virtual gaming session occurs in response to an indication that value is entered on the one gaming machine;

identifying ~~the~~ an end of ~~said~~ the first virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the first virtual gaming session occurs before the start of the first regular gaming session and in response to the indication that the player card is inserted into the one gaming machine;

collecting second activity data from ~~said~~ the one gaming machine, wherein said second activity data corresponds to activity on the one gaming machine during ~~said~~ the first virtual gaming session;

transmitting ~~said~~ the first activity data and ~~said~~ the second activity data to ~~said~~ the central authority; and

storing ~~information in said~~ in the player account of ~~said~~ the database information based on ~~said~~ the first activity data and ~~said~~ the second activity data[[;]].

~~wherein said first regular gaming session and said first virtual gaming session are non-overlapping.~~

2.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said step of transmitting
~~occurs~~ consists of transmitting the first activity data and the second activity data at two separate
times.

3.   (Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said first activity data is transmitted
at the end of said first regular gaming session and said second activity data is transmitted at the end
of said first virtual gaming session.

4-5.   (Canceled).

6.   (Currently Amended) A method according to claim [[4]]1 wherein said step of
transmitting occurs at a single time and said single time is at the end of ~~said first virtual~~ the first
regular gaming session.

7-26.   (Canceled).

27.   (Withdrawn) A method of operating a gaming system having a central authority
associated with a database and interconnected to a plurality of gaming machines, comprising:

        establishing a player account in said database associated with at least one player;

        providing a primary indicator in an active state at a first time and providing said
primary indicator in an inactive state at a second time;

providing a secondary indicator in an active state at a third time and providing said secondary indicator in an inactive state at a fourth time;

collecting first activity data from one of said gaming machines when said primary indicator is in an active state;

collecting second activity data from said one gaming machine when said secondary indicator is in an active state and said primary indicator is in an inactive state; and

transmitting said first and said second activity data to said central authority.

28.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27, and further including providing player identification information associated with said player account at said first time at said one gaming machine.

29.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 28 wherein said step of transmitting includes transmitting said player identification information.

30.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 and further including storing said first and said second activity data in said database where said first and said second activity data is associated with said player account.

31.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said one gaming machine includes a credit meter for tracking game credits; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes monitoring the game credits on said credit meter.

32.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said one gaming machine receives currency; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes monitoring when currency is inserted.

33.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said one gaming machine receives a voucher; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes monitoring when a voucher is inserted.

34.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 and further including providing a cashless transfer to said one gaming machine; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes monitoring when a cashless transfer to said one gaming machine occurs.

35.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 34 wherein said step of providing said cashless transfer includes transferring value to said one gaming machine from a removable device.

36.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 31 wherein said gaming machine receives a player card; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes detecting the credits remaining on said credit meter when said player card is removed from said one gaming machine.

37. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said gaming machine receives a player card; and wherein said step of providing said secondary indicator in an active state includes detecting when the last game played remains uncompleted when said player card is removed from said one gaming machine.

38. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring an audio sensor.

39. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a visual sensor.

40. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a thermal sensor.

41. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring an infrared sensor.

42.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a motion sensor.

43.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a light sensor.

44.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring an end-of-game signal.

45.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a begin-game signal.

46.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a signal from a casino employee.

47.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring said primary indicator changing from an active state to an inactive state.

48.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a signal from a central authority.

49.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a magnetic card reader.

50.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring an optical card reader.

51.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a card swipe reader.

52.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a card insertion reader.

53.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a smart card reader.

54.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a biometric sensor.

55.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a fingerprint sensor.

56.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a thumbprint sensor.

57.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a palm sensor.

58.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring a hand sensor.

59.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring an eye sensor.

60.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring an iris sensor.

61.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring visual recognition.

62.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring facial recognition.

63.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring audio recognition.

64.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 54 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises monitoring voice recognition.

65.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 28 wherein said step of providing player identification information comprises transfer of identification information via radio waves.

66.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 28 wherein said step of providing player identification information comprises transfer of identification information via infrared light.

67.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises magnetic sensors.

68.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises a central authority.

69.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring multiple indicators.

70.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises multiple indicators.

71.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said secondary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said secondary indicator comprises monitoring a period of time.

72.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises a period of time.

73.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 wherein said first and second activity data is stored in a device associated with said one gaming machine.

74.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 wherein said first and second activity data is stored in an account file stored in said database; and wherein said account file is also associated with a second specific player.

75.   (Withdrawn) The method described in claim 74, where said account file is associated with a group of players.

76.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 wherein a plurality of account files are stored in said database, each of said account files being associated with at least one player.

77.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27 wherein a signal is sent to said central authority when said secondary indicator changes state.

78.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein said first activity data contains a representation of gaming device conditions.

79.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein said first activity data contains a representation of an amount of player activity.

80.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein a signal is sent to said central authority when said primary indicator changes state.

81.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein said second activity data contains a representation of gaming device conditions.

82.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein said second activity data contains a representation of an amount of player activity.

83.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 28 wherein said step of providing said primary indicator in an inactive state includes detecting when said player identification information is no longer being provided.

84.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 28 wherein said step of providing said primary indicator in an inactive state includes monitoring the location of the source of said player identification information.

85.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said step of providing said primary indicator in an inactive state includes monitoring a period of time.

86.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said first activity data is collected before said second activity data is collected.

87.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said second activity data is collected before said first activity data is collected.

88.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 wherein said step of transmitting transmits said first activity data and said second activity data at separate times.

89.   (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 27 and further including determining the state of said primary indicator; and wherein determining the state of said primary indicator comprises providing said player identification information.

90.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 28 wherein said step of providing player identification information comprises monitoring multiple sensors.

91.   (New) The method according to claim 1 and further including:

identifying a start of a second virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of said second virtual gaming session occurs:

(i) after the end of the first regular gaming session; and

(ii) in response to an indication that the removal of the player card from the one gaming machine occurred while a game was in progress on the one gaming machine, while credits were available for play on the one gaming machine, or both;

identifying an end of the second virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the second virtual gaming session occurs in response to one or more of:

> (i) an indication that a game is completed on the one gaming machine;
>
> (ii) an indication that no credits are available for play on the one gaming machine; and
>
> (iii) an indication that the player card is re-inserted into the one gaming machine;

collecting third activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said third activity data corresponds to activity on the one gaming machine during the second virtual gaming session;

transmitting the third activity data to the central authority; and

storing in the player account of the database information based on the third activity data.

92.   (New) The method according to claim 1 wherein the value entered on the one gaming machine comprises coins.

93.   (New) A method of operating a gaming system having a central authority associated with a database and interconnected to a plurality of gaming machines, comprising:

establishing in the database a player account associated with at least one player;

providing a player card to the one player, said player card being associated with the player account;

identifying a start of a first regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of said first regular gaming session occurs in response to an indication that the player card is inserted into one of the plurality of gaming machines;

identifying an end of the first regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the first regular gaming session occurs in response to an indication that the player card is removed from the one gaming machine;

collecting first activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said first activity data corresponds to activity on the one gaming machine during the first regular gaming session;

identifying a start of a first virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of said first virtual gaming session occurs:

(i) after the end of the first regular gaming session; and

(ii) in response to an indication that the removal of the player card from the one gaming machine occurred while a game was in progress on the one gaming machine, while credits were available for play on the one gaming machine, or both;

identifying an end of the first virtual gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the first virtual gaming session occurs in response to one or more of:

(i) an indication that a game is completed on the one gaming machine;

(ii) an indication that no credits are available for play on the one gaming machine; and

(iii) an indication that the player card is re-inserted into the one gaming machine;

collecting second activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said second activity data corresponds to activity on the one gaming machine during the first virtual gaming session;

transmitting the first activity data and the second activity data to the central authority; and

storing in the player account of the database information based on the first activity data and the second activity data.

94.   (New) The method according to claim 93 and further including:

identifying a start of a second regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said start of said second regular gaming session occurs after the end of the first virtual gaming session and in response to the indication that the player card is re-inserted into the one gaming machine;

identifying an end of the second regular gaming session associated with the player account, wherein said end of the second regular gaming session occurs in response to an indication that the player card is removed from the one gaming machine;

collecting third activity data from the one gaming machine, wherein said third activity data corresponds to game play on the one gaming machine during the second regular gaming session;

transmitting the third activity data to the central authority; and

storing in the player account of the database information based on the third activity data.

95.   (New) A method according to claim 93 wherein said step of transmitting consists of transmitting the first activity data and the second activity data at different times.

96.   (New) A method according to claim 95 wherein the first activity data is transmitted at the end of the first regular gaming session and the second activity data is transmitted at the end of the first virtual gaming session.

97.   (New) A method according to claim 93 wherein said step of transmitting occurs at a single time and said single time is at the end of the first virtual gaming session.